

I'm delighted to have the opportunity to be with you this morning at this 69th annual meeting of the Society of American Foresters. In my new job I'm extremely conscious of the need for dependence upon professional competence in all fields if we are going to make progress toward our USDA goals. So I'm delighted to have this opportunity to come here and ask your help.

I have outlined our major objectives many times. They are: To increase farm net income -- conserve and improve our natural resources -- help revitalize our rural communities -- vigorously attack hunger in America -- improve the quality and safety of our food supply -- and expand agricultural markets, especially exports.

Each of these goals is vital to our interests as citizens. But you as professional foresters, are most directly concerned with two of these -- the conservation, wise use, and improvement of natural resources and the stimulation of rural development.

You are aware of the projected increase of U.S. population to 300 million by the Year 2000 -- 100 million more than now. This implies a need for at least 50 percent more food -- at least 50 percent more housing -- twice as much water -- and three times as much demand for outdoor recreation. Both timber users and protectionists recognize and react to these developing pressures.

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Address by Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin at 69th annual meeting of the Society of American Foresters, Miami Beach, Florida, October 13, 1969, 10 a.m., EDT.

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However, there is evidence on both sides that extremists may be over-reacting without consideration of the interplay essential to the fulfillment of our national goals.

Obviously, all of us must plan together for an expanded resource base to meet the needs of a growing America. There is no such thing as an instant forest.

Moreover, our planning and the actions flowing from our planning must be coordinated and comprehensive. Pure air, clean water, stable soils, productive land and forests, abundant wildlife, natural beauty, and recreational opportunities are all interrelated and mutually supporting objectives.

As a member of the President's Environmental Quality Council, I assure you that President Nixon and his Administration are keenly concerned about the need to conserve and develop the quantity and quality of America's natural resources.

In creating the Environmental Quality Council, President Nixon said, "Each day we receive new evidence of the declining quality of the American environment...The deterioration of the environment is in large measure the result of our inability to keep pace with progress. We have become victims of our own technological genius. But I am confident that the same energy and skill which gave rise to these problems can also be marshaled for the purpose of conquering them. Together we have damaged the environment and together we can improve it...We need a high standard of living, but we also need a high quality of life..."

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This Administration is dedicated to the achievement of that high quality of life, through broad programs of resource management and conservation.

But while government can lead and can focus the nation's attention on resource conservation and improvement, the success of our national efforts depends upon what is done by the citizens of the United States through government and industry at all levels and, more particularly, on the dedicated support of highly qualified professional organizations such as yours. The people will ultimately determine how well the nation carries on the great conservation endeavor started around the turn of the century by Gifford Pinchot, Theodore Roosevelt, and others.

In preparing for this meeting, I had called to my attention a speech delivered by President Theodore Roosevelt before your Society in March 1903. Though sixty-six and one-half years have passed since this address was presented, it is still cogent, inspiring, and true. Let me quote a few excerpts.

"The forest policy of any country," Teddy Roosevelt said, "must be an essential part of its land policy."

Forestry, he continued, "means making the forest useful not only to the settler, the rancher, the miner, the man who lives in the neighborhood, but, indirectly, to the man who may live hundreds of miles off down the course of some great river which has had its rise among the forest-bearing mountains."

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Here is enunciated the principle of multiple use of forest resources -- a principle to which we are giving, and will continue to give, top priority. It is, after all, the law of the land -- in the interest of the land and the benefits that flow from the land to the people.

President Roosevelt gave this charge to the members of your Society: "You must convince the people of the truth -- that the success of home-makers depends in the long run upon the wisdom with which the nation takes care of its forests."

While sixty-six years have elapsed since that great speech was made to your forerunners in this Society, its wisdom is as demonstrable now as it was then. Just last month in an address before the American Forestry Association, the distinguished Chairman of the National Geographic Society, Melville Bell Grosvenor, a dedicated conservationist, reminded us that wise use is a basic element of true conservation. He said, "The big thing in conservation is wise use of the things we possess. Merely to survive, we must use our natural resources. We must eat, we must clothe and house ourselves. If in so doing we ruin our soil, pollute our waters, defile our air, lay waste our forests, we are bad conservationists, and the ultimate penalty for bad conservation will be, first, lives scarcely worth living, and finally, extinction.

"The non-destructive use of natural resources -- the major part of good conservation -- is beautifully defined in a term that originated in forestry: 'sustained yield.'

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"If we practice sustained yield, then we are good conservationists, and humankind can look forward to unlimited existence in an environment that will assure contentment and happiness."

In the two-thirds of a century since President Theodore Roosevelt delivered the address I referred to earlier, much conservation progress has been made.

Through the cooperative efforts of farmers and landowners, of the Federal and State Departments of Agriculture, the Land Grant Institutions, and private organizations, many conservation practices have been promoted and applied across the nation.

Our forest lands, which include roughly one-third of all the nation's land, have profited greatly by improved management practices.

But our efforts must now be both intensified and accelerated. We must improve present programs and devise new ones, as obviously needed, to meet the demands of the Seventies and beyond.

In the years ahead, for example, the need for housing will put great pressures on our forests.

At the moment the impact of high interest rates and inflation have severely slowed the number of new housing starts. But a break in housing starts will come, and when it does the demand for lumber will surge and continue to mount.

The new families that we will have in America will also impose new demands for recreation and related forest benefits.

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To meet these long-term needs will require more intensive multiple-use management of all commercial forest lands, Federal, State, and industrial, and of the 60 percent of commercial forest lands in non-industrial private ownership.

In this connection, I commend highly the efforts of the Southern Forest Resource Analysis Committee to develop further the private forest benefit potential of the South's "Third Forest." The aim, as you know, is to rebuild a massive forest potential from the 145 million acres of third generation forest lands held by over 1 million non-industrial private owners in the South.

This program, based on providing increased incentive, assistance, and professional advice to landowners, has the goal of more than doubling the volume of timber production in the South. This pioneering effort can serve as a guide and an inspiration to both public and private foresters throughout the United States.

This development in the South is a logical extension of the American Tree Farm System which, during the last 28 years, has prompted more than 33,000 American landowners to dedicate nearly 75 million private acres to timber farming. The Tree Farm program initiated by private industry has proved itself, as I am sure the Third Forest concept will do.

Another promising step taken just recently is the formation of Trees for People -- A National Task Force for Private Forest Management. This group, made up of conservation associations, industry members, and government officials will seek to come up with recommendations on how to amalgamate and realize the great potential of private forest lands.

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As we confront the future we already have much of the technology to meet prospective needs. What is lacking, however, is a national will to apply this technology to all forest lands -- Federal, State, and private -- based on a general realization that land and resource use patterns are too important to be left to haphazard, uncoordinated development.

At the Federal level we are intensifying efforts to lead, educate, and carry out research in the closest feasible cooperation with the States, the universities, the Agricultural Experiment Stations and forestry schools, forestry and other conservation organizations, and all those industrial and individual owners who manage the forests whether for profit or pleasure.

To achieve these obvious requirements for effective resource management:

The Forest Service will promote and carry out the twin principles of sustained yields and multiple-use management even more effectively than in the past.

The Federal Extension Service and the cooperating State Services will intensify their education and outreach activities to rural communities, forest landowners, and forest products industries.

The Soil Conservation Service will provide effective technical assistance to help build the forest resource base on farm lands and watersheds.

The Farmers Home Administration and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service will continue to provide some of the needed capital for private forest improvement through their loan and cost-sharing programs.

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Our national obligations to the 100 million new people we will be accommodating by the Year 2000 are clear. So are the means which must be applied to meet those obligations.

New houses, new industries, new roads, new cities must be built, but they must be built without destroying prime agricultural land and forests, or creating new flood and pollution hazards.

An abundance of raw materials must be provided for business and industry, but this abundance cannot be permitted to deplete or impair the soil, forest, and water resources that produce them.

And, while we face and overcome these new challenges we must sustain and develop our existing rural economy and society.

We must raise the level of rural living in order to bring about a healthier distribution of our national population. Many of our urban problems today have been brought about by the heavy migration from rural America.

One of the ways to raise the level of rural living is by more effective use of rural resources. This is an area in which forest management and forest enterprises, recreation and tourism, can play an increasingly important role. It has been estimated that forest-related enterprises now contribute about 5 percent of the Gross National Product and provide nearly 4 million jobs. Greater development of our forest potential for all uses can bring renewed growth to the rural economy. It can attract new industries, new markets, new home builders, and most significantly, while stimulating rural development in a material sense, it can broaden the spiritual and recreational benefits to which our people properly aspire.

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Many communities are taking a careful look at all of their available resources and making plans for their full development and use. Your Society constitutes a potent, professional resource for the planners in our rural communities. I urge everyone of you to work closely with the counties, multi-county districts, and States in developing plans for our future. Plans are already being made. Your professional judgments must be available to make such plans realistic and responsible "to guarantee the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run."

The adaptation of national policies to local conditions is sometimes very difficult. It is almost impossible to write a national policy which adequately covers all situations.

We must have respect and concern for the needs and the ideas of local people. One of the things with which I am much concerned and in which I seek the help of such organizations as yours is in answering the question: How do we adapt national policies so as best to serve community needs under their own specific circumstances?

This Administration is prepared to intensify and extend its work with all levels of government, as well as with individuals, organizations, and industries, to meet the resource problems of today and turn them to opportunities for people. The Society of American Foresters has the opportunity and the obligation to be a partner in this essential national undertaking. Together we can achieve the quality of life that President Nixon has set as a major national goal. Let's do it.

For P.M.'s Monday, Oct. 13, 1969







